



The importance of biosecurity when purchasing cattle

Purchasing cattle is the riskiest practice a farmer will carry out, from a disease risk point of view. When buying animals, you risk the introduction of a range of diseases into your herd. The risks increase with the numbers of animals bought and the number of herds from which they come. Remember that when a pregnant animal is purchased, the unborn calf should also be considered as 'purchased' as they can be infected even if the dam is not.

Bio-exclusion is the term given to the combination of practices that help prevent introduction of infectious agents from outside your herd.

PLAN AHEAD

If introducing animals, plan to do so as few times as possible and be aware of how the health of your home bred animals may be affected by the health status of the bought-in animals.

BUY IN AS FEW ANIMALS AS POSSIBLE

Is it essential that you buy in to achieve your business goals? Minimise the number of animals that need to be purchased.

BUY FROM AS FEW HERDS AS POSSIBLE

If possible buy from farmers that you have built a relationship with so that you know their herd health status.

SELECT LOWER RISK HERDS

Purchase animals in from herds that have good disease control practices on farm.

SELECT LOWER RISK ANIMALS

Buy in low-risk animals: for example, younger animals or non-pregnant animals. Avoid buying anything with signs of disease.

REDUCE TRANSPORT RISKS

Use your own clean, disinfected transport where possible. Don't mix your animals with animals belonging to other herdowners during transport.

IMPLEMENT A QUARANTINE PERIOD

Quarantined animals should be in complete isolation from the rest of the herd and should not share the same airspace. Animals should be quarantined for at least four weeks, during which period you should:

- monitor for any clinical signs of disease
- vaccinate and dose animals to ensure they have received the same protective treatments as your own animals receive
- test for specific diseases to reduce the risk of accidental introduction of these diseases.